

CULTURAL RESOURCES UPDATE – PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT

The Truckee Meadows cultural resources staff is in the process of developing a programmatic agreement (PA) to take into account adverse effects that may occur as a result of construction of the flood control project. The PA is a document that specifies through Stipulations what course of action the Corps will take to be in continued compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. PA's are developed when a federal agency's project may have a long-term build out, and the impacts to cultural resources are not yet known.

The PA is basically an agreement between the federal agency and the State Historic Preservation Officer. Other interested special interest groups are invited to participate in the process. They are known as concurring parties, whereas, the Corps and the SHPO are the signatories. The outside parties that are being invited to participate in the process are the cities of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County, and Storey County, The University of Nevada, Reno, and the Washoe Indian Tribe of Nevada and California, and the Pyramid Lake Paiute.

Thus far, Corps team members met with the Storey County Board of Commissioners regarding the draft PA on November 4th. On Monday December 7th, two members of the Storey County Commissioners gave the Corps team a tour of known cultural resource sites on the downstream portion of the Truckee River that flows through Storey County. On December 8th, the Board of Commissioners voted to participate in the PA process as consulting parties.

The draft PA has been revised in consultation with the Office of Historic Preservation in Nevada. Very soon it will be circulated to the prospective concurring parties with a request for comments within 30 days. We anticipate execution of the PA by early Spring 2005. As soon as the District Engineer and the State Historic Preservation Officer sign the PA, the Corps will be in compliance with Section 106 for the Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project.

The cultural staff has begun to conduct a pedestrian survey of the area of potential effects (APE) for the proposed project. We are still in the process of acquiring rights of entry to various properties to conduct the survey. Weather permitting, the cultural resources survey are expected to be concluded in late winter or early spring.

If historical, prehistoric, or ethnographic cultural materials are found on survey, they will need to be evaluated for the eligibility toward listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In some instances, the eligibility potential of a cultural resource can be determined from archival information, or the size and perceived complexity of it. If eligibility cannot be determined, then subsurface investigations would be required to recover enough data to make the determination. However, prior to initiating subsurface investigations, the Project Manager will be notified, who will in turn determine if it can be avoided, incorporated into the project, or the project can be redesigned around the discovery area.. Otherwise, options will be negotiated with the property owner regarding access to the site for excavation, demolition, or other project design features.

A copy of the draft PA and a copy of the latest request for rights-of-entry are provided.